Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-2, and 15-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Welch et al (H1604). It is the Examiners contention that while Welch et al disclose all the steps of the present process, they fail to disclose the ultimate density of at least 1000g/L. The Examiner further contends that it would have obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to optimize the density of Welch et al. Applicants' respectfully traverse the rejection.

Welch et al disclose a process for preparing detergent agglomerates which is commonly referred to as post tower densification. (Col. 3, line 45+). In general, Welch discloses a process whereby spray dried detergent granules are added to a single moderate speed mixer and admixed with a sprayable binder to form detergent agglomerates. Of course, the process may be employed to produce other types of agglomerates such as for bleach products or single detergent ingredients as well. However, the main focus of Welch et al is to achieve post tower densification while employing a single moderate speed mixer thereby reducing capital and operating expense. Welch teaches preparation of granular detergents with a preferred density range of from 700-800 g/L.

Significantly, what Welch fails to disclose is Applicants' basic process. Applicants' claim a process for preparing a non-particulate detergent product such as a tablet as opposed to the particulate composition prepared by the process of Welch et al. Applicants' claim key process elements completely absent from the teachings of Welch such as compaction. As Welch et al desire particulate compositions there is simply no teaching of Applicants claimed compaction step. Furthermore, as Welch desires a resultant composition in particulate form, there is simply no motivation to modify the teachings of Welch to provide for its many defects. Thus, Welch lacks much more than a optimizable variable as is the contention of the Examiner. Welch fails to teach the claimed final product of non-particulate detergent, fails to disclose the key process step of compaction and fails to teach the density of at least 1000 g/L. Accordingly, Claims 1-2 and 15-35 are novel and unobvious over the teachings of Welch et al.

Claims 26-35 and 37-38 have also been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Pepe et al (USP 5,415,806). It is again the Examiner's contention that Pepe et al disclose essentially the same invention as Applicants' and any such differences are obvious optimizable variables. Applicants' traverse the rejection as follows.

As did Welch et al, Pepe is again a process for the manufacture of granular detergent products. Pepe et al fail to teach critical features of Applicants' claimed invention. Namely, Pepe fails to disclose a non-particulate detergent product. The invention in Pepe revolves around the desire to increase the cold water solubility of particulate detergent powders. Pepe's invention involves the use of specific oxide condensates as solubility aids. Pepe fails to deal with non-particulate detergent products and importantly fails to teach a compaction step converting a particulate product to a non-particulate one. Accordingly, Pepe, as in Welch, fail to disclose much more than art recognized density variation. Pepe fails to teach the essence of Applicants' claimed invention and key claim limitations. Thus, Claims 26-35 are novel and unobvious over the prior art of record.

Claim 36 has been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Dinniwell et al (USP 5,569,645). The Examiner contends that Dinniwell teaches all the essential elements of Claim 36 with the exception of the density which is an optimizable variable. Applicants' respectfully traverse this rejection.

Dinniwell teaches detergent compositions which are combinations of spray dried particles and detergent agglomerates to deliver a final particulate detergent composition. As in both Welch et al and in Pepe et al, Dinniwell fails to disclose the essence of Applicants' claimed invention. Dinniwell teaches only particulate compositions, failing to teach or disclose the non-particulate products as claimed by Applicants'. Dinniwell fails to teach Applicants' claimed compaction step. In addition, Dinniwell fails to teach Application liquid spraying step. While Dinniwell discloses that after the agglomerates and spray dried powders are mixed, additional liquid components may be sprayed on the mixture, Dinniwell fails to teach that sufficient liquid is sprayed to reduce intra particle porosity as is claimed by Applicants'. As intra particle porosity is being reduced to enhance the properties of Applicants' compressed non-particulate detergent product such as a tablet and not for a particulate powder as claimed in Dinniwell, there is simply no motivation of one of ordinary skill in the to optimize liquid spray on in Dinniwell due to a reduction in intra particle porosity. Accordingly, Claim 36 is novel and unobvious over the prior art of record.

Conclusion

In light of the remarks presented herein, Applicants' respectfully submit that Claims 1-2 and 15-36 are allowable over the prior art of record or any combination thereof. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested. In the event that issues remain prior to allowance of the noted claims, then the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' undersigned attorney to discuss any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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